

Today's News - Tuesday, December 22, 2015

EDITOR'S NOTE: 2015 has been an eventful/inspiring/depressing/surprising year of news - and we've enjoyed sharing it all with you. This is our last newsletter of the year. We'll be back January 4, 2016. We wish everyone Happy Ho-Ho-Holidays and a New Year filled with grand adventures and great expectations fulfilled!!!

- Kimmelman waxes poetic about a sanitation garage and salt shed that are "two of the best examples of new public architecture" in NYC that are not only an "eye-catching tribute to inventive design," but also a "salutary lesson in urban responsibility."
- Kuma's "design A" picked for Tokyo's new 2020 Olympic stadium: "It has already been dubbed the 'hamburger.'"
- Hadid minces no words about her upset re: the Tokyo stadium saga, charging the Japanese government and architects of collusion, and claiming "Kuma's replacement design has 'remarkable similarities' to her own."
- In (mostly) brighter news for Zaha, she's designing a tower for Melbourne (some tweaking required).
- Heathcote bemoans Birmingham being "in danger of losing architectural character": "at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, Birmingham genuinely was a place of urban and architectural experimentation. It did not end well - new buildings have none of the civic and urban ambition of the modernism of the 1960s."
- Eyefuls of Astrologo's amazing photos of "a wild, eclectic ode to Brutalism that is slowly crumbling away" in Italy: Perugini's Casa Sperimentale is "a striking, Frankenstein-like amalgamation of volumes" (truly amazing!).
- Calatrava's new museum in Rio "mixes science with an innovative design to focus on sustainable cities" - and only one part of the city's huge new development project.
- Eyefuls of MAD's Harbin Opera House in China: its "show-stopping design captures a fluid, alien-like appearance, echoing something out of War of the Worlds."
- Chaban looks at the residential skyscrapers rising in Manhattan: "Whether creating subway overcrowding or shadows on public spaces, these high-rises could have unintended consequences on the cityscape" (and their promotional materials show unobstructed views, and "sometimes omit photos of their stratospheric neighbors").
- Saffron is relieved that "there's time to get the details right" in the design of the "latest, most audacious" glassy tower in Philly: it "would be the tallest residential building in the city - how it gets along with its neighbors is crucial."
- Iovine offers a different angle in reviewing 2015: "This year's best buildings proved that architecture doesn't have to be loud to be important - quieter projects that slip onto the scene with less hoopla are equally worthy of notice, especially when they expand on definitions of what architecture can be."
- Hosey ponders a future when "buildings design themselves": "Artificial creativity isn't science fiction - it could be the future of architecture. The only thing holding it back is architects themselves."
- Salingaros has issues with architects who dismiss people who complain about built environments that make them feel uncomfortable. "But ordinary people's reactions are in fact correct - the search for innovation through provocation renounces life-enhancing environments."
- An impressive shortlist of international teams in the running to design Australia's State Library Victoria.
- A derelict 200-year-old barn is reborn as an outreach and education facility for a conservatory and botanical garden in Ohio.
- A nice Christmas present for Detroit: it's the first U.S. city picked in the design field in UNESCO's Creative Cities Network.
- Lord Rogers speaks out about the refugee crisis: "Doctors of the World is on the frontline. French and British government spending goes on fences, sniffer dogs and cameras, rather than food, water and shelter" - and medical care.
- One we couldn't resist: 9 projects that "could have taken inspiration from the epic 'Star Wars' saga - or vice versa" (very cool!).
- Weekend diversions:
- Gannon "finds the Chicago Architecture Biennial unambitious and exhausting. My quarrel with the neo-pomo and 'neo-critical' projects has less to do with the self-indulgent frivolity and self-righteous banality than with the fact that so many talented architects set their sights so low" (ouch!).
- "Cosmonauts: Birth of the Space Age" at London's Science Museum is a "showstopper of Russian spacecraft and artifacts - this is a cosmic parade."
- "Worship: A History of New Zealand Church Design" is a "gorgeous" book "written by an architect, for other architects" (and everyone else).

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In Sanitation-and-Salt Complex in TriBeCa, a Salutary Lesson in Urban Responsibility: What opponents feared would be a blight on their neighborhood has turned out to be a boon: a crystalline, eye-catching tribute to inventive design: ...not just two of the best examples of new public architecture in the city but a boon to the neighborhood...I can't think of a better public sculpture to land in New York than the shed. By Michael Kimmelman -- Dattnr Architects; WXY Architecture + Urban Design [images]- New York Times

Design by architect Kengo Kuma picked for Tokyo's new 2020 Olympic stadium: ...picked a less-costly and greenery-rich plan...for the new National Stadium...formerly known as design A...It has already been dubbed the "hamburger"... "the judges assessed design A as being less risky"... -- Zaha Hadid; Toyo Ito [images]- Japan Times

Zaha Hadid accuses Japanese government and architects of collusion over Tokyo stadium: ...says that Kengo Kuma's replacement design has "remarkable similarities" to her own...said that she had been treated shockingly.- Dezeen

Zaha Hadid designs her first tower building for Melbourne market: ...a 54-level mixed-use tower...has undergone a "significant" reduction in height and extended setbacks from neighbouring buildings to comply with the new rules...developer argues the plan's contributions to the public realm will justify the minister using his discretion to approve it. -- Plus Architecture [image]- Australian Financial Review

Birmingham in danger of losing architectural character: ...most of the city was destroyed over the 20th century, either by bombs or by bulldozers. It was rebuilt as a modern metropolis...Now the bulldozers are back...demolition work began on the massive...City Library...at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, Birmingham genuinely was...a place of urban and architectural experimentation...It did not end well...new buildings have none of the civic and urban ambition of the modernism of the 1960s... By Edwin Heathcote -- John Madin; Future Systems/Jan Kaplicky; Mecanoo; Alejandro Zaera-Polo; Broadway Malayan- Financial Times (UK)

Brutalism in Ruins: Exploring Casa Sperimentale, Italy's Lost Architectural Relic: In the town of Fregene on the outskirts of Rome, Italy, photographer and urban explorer Oliver Astrologo has been documenting...a wild, eclectic ode to Brutalism that is slowly crumbling away on a wooded plot near the coast...a striking, Frankenstein-like amalgamation of volumes that possess dashes of Paul Rudolph's Brutalism and Le Corbusier's Modernism. By Paul Keskeys -- Giuseppe Perugini [images]- Architizer

Future of Urban Planning on Display in Rio's Newest Museum: ...taking a bold approach to addressing the future of the planet and its environment. The Museu do Amanhã (Museum of Tomorrow) mixes science with an innovative design to focus on sustainable cities...just one of dozens of new developments built or in the works for Rio's "Porto Maravilha" project... -- Santiago Calatrava- Next City (formerly Next American City)

Out of this world crystalline structure unveiled: The Harbin Opera House in northern China...show-stopping design...captures a fluid, alien-like appearance, echoing something out of War of the Worlds...The architectural progression orchestrates a stunning journey... -- Ma Yansong/MAD Architects [images]- DesignCurial (UK)

As a New High Society Climbs in Manhattan, It's a Race to the Top: Promotional materials for the new towers on Billionaires' Row, emphasizing unobstructed views, sometimes omit photos of their stratospheric neighbors...Whether the omissions are by accident or design depends on whom you ask...Whether creating subway overcrowding or shadows on public spaces.

these high-rises could have unintended consequences on the cityscape. By Matt A.V. Chaban- New York Times

Philadelphia skyscraper 1911 Walnut needs to earn its place in the sky, on the ground: Philadelphia architecture seems to be following the fashion crowd...If it's a high-end high-rise, it is invariably draped in a see-through sheath of glass. The latest, most audacious example...this is never going to be a building that shrinks quietly into the background...would be the tallest residential building in the city...how it gets along with its neighbors is crucial...Fortunately, there's time to get the details right. By Inga Saffron -- Solomon, Cordwell, Buenz - Philadelphia Inquirer

The Best Architecture of 2015: Their Modesty Becomes Them: This year's best buildings proved that architecture doesn't have to be loud to be important: ...quieter projects that slip onto the scene with less hoopla but are equally worthy of notice, especially when they expand on definitions of what architecture can be. By Julie V. Iovine -- Lake|Flato; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); TEN Arquitectos; DesignGroup [images] - Wall Street Journal

When Buildings Design Themselves: Automation could revolutionize architecture - by eliminating architects: .With sufficient computational power and speed, buildings could evolve the way any living system does and make design cheaper, faster, smarter, more efficient, more sustainable, and more beautiful...Artificial creativity isn't science fiction - it could be the future of architecture. The only thing holding it back is architects themselves. By Lance Hosey- Huffington Post

Why Do Some People Choose Oppressive Environments? Some environments soothe and heal; others induce anxiety and illness. When people complain that our built environment makes them feel uncomfortable, they are dismissed as...“unappreciative of contemporary design.” But ordinary people's reactions are in fact correct...the search for innovation through provocation renounces life-enhancing environments. By Nikos A. Salingaros- Metropolis Magazine

Shortlisted Design teams for the State Library Victoria Vision 2020 project announced: ...four shortlisted consortia feature local and international expertise...“It will firmly position Australia's oldest and busiest public library as a contemporary centre of knowledge, inspiration and innovation.” -- Architectus/Schmidt Hammer Lassen/Andronas Conservation Architects; Ashton Raggatt McDougall/Bryce Raworth Heritage Architects; Conrad Gargett/Lyons; Hassell/Purcell Heritage Architects - World Architecture

An Old Barn Gets a New Life as The Wells Barn at the Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens: ...an outreach and education facility...pegs the barn at around 200 years old...was reconstructed as it originally was built, giving the Conservatory the chance to educate patrons on early barn construction... -- DesignGroup; MKSK Landscape Architecture; Mount Vernon Barn Company [images] - Columbus Underground (Ohio)

Detroit Named First U.S. “City of Design”; ...brings Detroit into UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, with 115 other places that have been honored...for their history of creating cultural and creative industries...the first U.S. city ever picked in the design field...DC3, the Detroit Creative Corridor Center, applied for the UNESCO acknowledgement...- Next City (formerly Next American City)

Lord Rogers: Help for refugees is a mark of our civilisation: We must support those facing this crisis, says Richard Rogers whose family fled fascist Italy in 1939: Europe is facing a refugee crisis unprecedented since the second world war. Doctors of the World is on the frontline...Governments are doing very little, obliging charities to step in...French and British government spending goes on fences, sniffer dogs and cameras, rather than food, water and shelter. - Guardian (UK)

The Architecture Awakens: 9 Projects that Emulate the Star Wars Aesthetic: ...could have taken inspiration from this epic saga - or vice versa. -- Frank Lloyd Wright; James Law Cybertecture; Witold Lipinski; Bernard Tschumi; Rem Koolhaas/OMA; Lebbeus Woods; Aedas; Heerim Architects; Moon Hoon [images] - Architizer

Review> On Horizons: Todd Gannon finds the Chicago Architecture Biennial unambitious and exhausting: My quarrel with the neo-pomo and “neo-critical” projects...has less to do with the self-indulgent frivolity and self-righteous banality...than with the fact that so many talented architects set their sights so low. -- Sarah Herda; Joseph Grima - The Architect's Newspaper

"Cosmonauts: Birth of the Space Age" at the Science Museum: Despite a few gaps, Herbert Wright finds this showstopper of Russian spacecraft and artefacts to be the epic show it promises to be...this is a cosmic parade. -- Real Studios [images] - DesignCurial / Blueprint Magazine (UK)

"Worship: A History of New Zealand Church Design" by Bill McKay and Jane Ussher: ...the most authoritative book yet on the architecture of the New Zealand church...written by an architect, for other architects...looks at the cream of the most recent crop of churches...the first church building presented is Shigeru Ban's Cardboard Cathedral, which is not a bad way to start...a gorgeous book...- ArchitectureNow (New Zealand)

A Filtered View #3: Socially Progressive, Architecturally Conservative: A San Francisco Paradox: "Disruption" is the new buzz-word, but our new architecture (with a few exceptions) is anything but disruptive. A hallmark of a socially progressive environment is diversity - we need diversity in architecture, too. By Charles F. Bloszies, FAIA- ArchNewsNow.com

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